

Jake's Workshops:

Vera Hall Ward (T)

Participants will learn songs from Vera Hall, a singer from Livingston, Alabama. Hall lived a hard life, but gained international renown for her music after John Lomax recorded her in the 1930's. Her unaccompanied, intimate and tasteful delivery of traditional song (largely religious) has made her a mainstay reference for a folk musicians. This class will review her repertoire and vocal style, and place her music into a broader cultural and historical context. (T)

Sung, but Unspoken (T)

Hidden Black America: This workshop will cover songs in a variety of styles that express aspects of Black experience which could not be discussed openly. In addition to the more common themes of hope and perseverance, the traditional songs of the Black community often contain scornful, angry and even vengeful subtext. Others were used as signals on the Underground Railroad, or to instruct fellow enslaved people on how to steal from white masters and overseers.

Singing Mass Incarceration (T)

Animosity toward law enforcement and correctional institutions has pervaded the musical repertoire of America's working class throughout the nation's history. That antipathy has grown along with the United States's prison population, now the largest of any country in the world. This class will cover songs from the southeastern United States that grapple with the nature and consequences of incarceration, informing our perspectives on the carceral system.

Ann's Workshops:

Harmony Session (T/S)

From hair-raising, to warm and soothing, singing harmony is one of the biggest joys to be had in any size ensemble. In this session we'll take a couple of simple traditional songs, and use several different approaches (such as "swooping", shadowing, droning, fugueing, with interval recognition and scale degrees as needed) to figure out some different styles of harmonies for them. No music reading required or expected, we'll be working by ear and with lyric sheets, as well as potentially wild hand gestures and possible other props. Unison singers welcome too!

Yodeling Session (T/S)

Yodeling - better than coffee, or most coffee anyway. In this session we will demystify the glottal clip that really "makes" a yodel. In the context of a couple of cowboy and Jimmie Rodgers songs, we'll play around with yodeling intervals, VOLUME, and finding the appropriate yodel key

for your vocal range. If time allows we'll add harmony, and how to add yodels to songs that don't have, but always wanted them.

Repertoire Session (T/S)

There's a subset of songs that popped up over the years that are a half-way point between traditional and popular songs. A lot of these were novelty numbers that turned up on 78s, their appeal firmly rooted in then and "now", as it was, then. It might have been stylistic lifting of, and poking fun at, old country songs by newer city folks, (as in Carson Robison's "I'm Going Back to Where I Come From"), or an old classic Weary Blues type of song (the Bowman Sister's "Old Lonesome Blues") jiggled and jazzed up a bit by those closer to the source, possibly to appeal to more radio audiences . Those are just two of the examples of several good old songs to be listened to, learned and sung in this session. If time allows we'll add some harmony.

Lindsay's Workshops:

The Heroic Feminine in Traditional Ballads (P/D)

Forget about all those heartbroken maidens weeping on the shore for long lost lovers! In this workshop, Lindsay will share a batch of her favorite songs featuring strong (and often wily) female protagonists, and in the process will discuss the complex, archetypal feminine ways the characters show strength in the face of adversity - using their wits, exploiting their sensuality, taking on men's roles, helping out their fellow woman, and more. We'll also discuss the historical evolution of female characters in old ballads, especially touching on the ways the narratives and humor shifted going into the era of printed broadsides.

Adapting Songs for Your Dialect, Style and Purpose (T/D)

This workshop will dive into Lindsay's methods, techniques and philosophies on how (and how much) to adapt Scottish and Irish songs for a modern American voice. She'll demonstrate the process and resources involved in taking a Scots dialect-heavy song from an archive recording, changing unfamiliar vocabulary and rhyme schemes, and ironing out melodic and rhythmic quirks to more easily add in instrumentation. We'll also talk about the process of adapting and subtly rewriting songs in ways that respect both tradition and the modern audience.

Herbal Folklore and Symbolism in Folk Song (P/S)

Yew and yarrow, oak and ash, roses and violets, and of course...parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme! In the past, herbs, trees, and flowers weren't mentioned in stories just to be pretty visual elements or rhyme tools - they also had a symbolism that added layers of depth and meaning to the songs and tales they were a part of. We'll review the meanings behind many of the most commonly mentioned herbs and plants in British and American folk song, how that relates to modern herbalism, and sing a couple of herb-laden songs together!